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PREFACE

The sketches brought together in this volume were originally written at the request of Mr. V. Kalidas for his weekly journal, "Onward". Some of them were later republished in "Indian Express". With two exceptions, they pretend to no close and intimate association on the part of the writer with the great men written about in the sketches. The exceptions are Messrs. T. Prakasam and Pothan Joseph. With the former I spent at least ten years of my life, and with the latter, nearly three. We tend to cultivate affection for those with whom we associate closely, and it may be that a little touch of sentiment not altogether in accord with perfect objective impartiality, has crept unawares into my mental formulations of the characters of these two. I have sought however to be as impartial as I could. To others in the series, especially Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar and Mr. Rajagopalachari, I am beholden for much personal kindness. But I have striven

to be an absolutely unbiassed critic. It is a daring thing to pass judgment on others, but public men invite it on themselves, and to respond without shrinking to this need of their vocation is part of a journalist's duty. Error, of course, there must always be in all human valuations. But what makes error forgivable is integrity. It is the essence of integrity that opinion should be altogether unpurchasable. In the connotation of price for the purchase of opinion, I place not merely money, but such motives as fear, ill-will and malice on the one hand, and blind devotion and a desire to please or secure favour on the other. The worthy critic may not be infallible, but he should be clean and fearless. I make the bold claim of cent per cent integrity for every line I have written at the time I wrote them, but my conception of integrity is not a fixity of judgment, but a faithful expression of it at any given time, subject to the changes of view that always pertain to an open mind. Some of the leaders whose sketches appear here are now in prison, and I have not been without qualms of conscience at the idea of giving publicity to any adverse comment affecting their

credit during their period of incarceration. But these sketches are not published for the first time. Moreover, is it not part of fundamental integrity not to allow events extraneous to the subject of a judgment to deflect one's course of action? I hold that a high regard and exacting criticism go together, and indictments that seem severe are the inverted reflections of unsparing homage. True respect lies in speaking one's thoughts about people without fear or favour and not in masking them in agreeable forms under the impetus of interested motives.

K. S. R.



' A figure of incalculable possibilities.'

MEN IN THE LIMELIGHT

MR. S. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar is a remarkable example of what may be called a composite personality. In the High Court, where he is undoubtedly the most distinguished legal practitioner of his generation, his bearing is one of quiet confidence. Punctilious punctuality, a mastery over self that never wavers or permits the slightest loss of temper, a reserve so complete as to be almost forbidding and to ward off all familiarities from the officious, are the ingredients of his external functioning as an advocate. Years of practice have fashioned out of them a standard of professional comportment unmatched for its suggestion of latent power without any taint of affectation or a desire to impress, a rare combination of attributes which may be regarded as the essence of artistry in the craftsmanship of advocacy.

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Underneath this disciplined exterior is a veritable dynamo of uncanny cerebral activity going on in the midst of an almost oceanic immensity of legal knowledge, and the reverence evoked in consequence whenever he enters any gathering of lawyers amounts almost to a feeling of awe. The worshipful attention paid by junior members of the bar to the august occupants of the Bench is generally reserved for him even by the loftiest-tempered of judges, and I carry the memory of an unforgettable scene when a great and famous judge not usually given to compromise reversed what seemed almost a foregone decision just because Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar was there to put his judicial quality to the test. It is as if judges whose function is that of trying cases feel themselves on trial when he confronts them as an advocate. He walks the courts apparently as all other advocates do, but hushed sensation follows his footsteps as a symbol of mental homage and he is treated by Bench and Bar alike as an Olympian whose supremacy none dare challenge. And he res-

ponds to this universal adulation of lawyers without any visible sign of being impressed by it, as though it were so indisputably his due as hardly to call for acknowledgement of any kind.

The reserve which clings to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar as lawyer completely vanishes in the expression of his personality as a politician. As a politician, he is tempestuous, dynamic, ceaselessly excited; outspoken, even garrulous; incapable of reservations; overwhelmingly emotional; and supremely gregarious. He will make wealthy landlords wait for hours for an audience in his ante-chamber when they come as clients to pay fabulous fees, but he will spend hours on end harranguing with impecunious political workers, and accompany them to the very gate of Amzad Bagh as though unwilling to part company. He is a supreme example of the rich man unspoiled by money. Many have renounced wealth for great causes and assumed the garb of simple living, but of very few can it be said that renunciation has ended hunger for the thing renounced. It seems, on the other hand, to

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intensify a process of subterranean longing for it, and the result is seen in the rather large number of our political sanyasins who continually burn incense at capitalist shrines. The impact of sainthood on our body politic has indeed bred a brand of humbugs who while figuring publicly as apostles of abstemiousness, contrive in private to lay the foundations of comfortable fortunes for their kindred if not for themselves, and there is hardly any among our big business magnates who has not realised the purchasable nature of the political influence wielded by the ascetics of Indian politics, and reaped a rich harvest out of the knowledge. This explains how, when Congress came to rule the land, it was the capitalists of the industrial centres that really pulled the strings from behind, and there was precious little of radicalism in the administration.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar has run through the gamut of Gandhian non-co-operation without ostentatiously forswearing the comforts of life, but he has acquired in the process a philosophical outlook for releasing the mind from the insidious trammels, which are so

many, that the lure of wealth is wont to create in an acquisitive world. Bondage comes not from possession but from desire; and a rich man who is devoid of a cash-bound mentality is a truer philosopher than any exemplar in simple living out of necessity, whose heart's hedonistic longings are only held in suspended animation. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar lives in a state of delightful freedom from many of the distorted complexes that spring from homage to money-power, and this accounts for his capacity to fraternise without patronage or affectation with all kinds of miscellaneous people irrespective of their level of culture and station in life. Harijan uplift is a conspicuous forum for the ventilation of altruism by the condescendingly lofty, and we have a significant measure of it in the Harijan colony at Delhi fashioned as a residence fit for Sybarites to advertise the munificence of the affluent patrons of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. In reality material gifts can bring no balm to the afflicted hearts of untouchables, and the sensitive members of the community might even feel insulted and degraded

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rather than exalted, by gifts intended to neutralise the effects of ill-treatment. What affords comfort to the down-trodden is friendship and companionship tendered spontaneously without artificiality or interested motive, and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar seems to have mastered the correct manner for winning the affection of Harijans. He is connected with no organisation for Harijan uplift. But to the self-respect of the community he has rendered an invaluable service by the unaffected grace and polish of his association with its members. He is a true father of the Harijan movement in the spiritual sense.

The hold of the Congress on the mass mind in Tamil Nadu is now supreme and others have reaped the benefit of it, but it was Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar who laid its first foundations. As an organiser of electioneering he is unbeatable, and for years he toiled all day and converted night into day with indefatigable energy devoted to canvassing opinion in favour of Congress aims. He was at everybody's door. None was too low for his appeal. He gave an impetus

almost cyclonic to a vast body of workers who carried the Congress message to every hearth and gave the Justice party successive routs that ended in the utter collapse of its political influence. Destiny seemed to have marked him out for the highest possible roles in national politics, but it was his misfortune to have received Wardha's disapproval in a rivalry for leadership that developed between him and the Nêhrus. The inexorable law ruling the politics of our day is that none can part political company from Mahatma Gandhi and yet remain anywhere near the helm of national affairs. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar went into the wilderness in the wake of differences with Gandhiji, and the succession to the second rung of all-India leadership (the first being held of course by Mahatma) passed dynastically from father to son in the Nehru family.

Years of political inaction have had their convulsive effect and Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar has latterly re-emerged into active politics, but he is, in some respects, not the same man to-day as he used to be. Character and treat-

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ment react on each other rising to new pinnacles with propitious stimuli, but a decline in the reverse direction is set in motion when appreciation flags. Politicians should shake off grievances as though they were the very plague, otherwise, from being aggrieved they would become embittered, which means a disgruntled state and the beginning of the end of all sense of proportion. Recent pronouncements of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar reveal a tendency to arrive at political judgments *via* signposts in the mental compass symbolising pre-conceived aversions, and his defence of coalition ministries comes under this category. Coalition ministries are appropriate to disappointed politicians who have missed the coveted goal of office through democratic openings and now want to get at them through bolsterings of communalism. That one like Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar whose political outlook is the very negation of communalism, should truckle to communalism in ministry-making, is one of the incomprehensible anomalies of our time.

At the confluence of circumstances represented by the present Mr. Srinivasa

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Iyengar is a figure of incalculable possibilities. His intellectual vigour is undiminished. His physical energy is as great as ever. Moral courage he never lacked. As to physical courage, the battleground of war where maiming and killing are rampant is a people's true test and training ground, and physical courage is a dormant potentiality in most people, developed or not according to the formative stress of self-directed volition and the congeniality of circumstances for evoking it. Men like Napoleon with nerves of iron that do not quail in the least while bullets fly all around are rare, but the bravery of their kind is an animal inheritance revealing no acquired fulfilment of discipline. As an expression of character there is merit only in laboured accumulations of physical fearlessness under the growing pressure of thought and will, and the inspiring lesson of Gandhiji's life to common men comes from the fact that, though universally acclaimed now as a supreme example of perfect courage, he was at one time a rather pathetic individual susceptible to endless

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frights. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar has not been in the stress of actual physical danger except on the one occasion of the Simon Commission's visit, when, despite the prophecies of calumniators, he evinced a quite competent and adequate level of leadership, for taking out a huge procession in Madras streets in the teeth of a police force armed with lathis which, to all appearances, they seemed to have no disinclination to use and use with severity, for preventing or dispersing the procession. By temperament and past achievements his place is in the vanguard of political effort devised for the realisation of Congress objectives, and not in the troubled waters (reflecting dark clouds of communalism) in which he is now occasionally found to be fishing, in rather strange company with whom he can have little in common.



*'He dreams of barter and village
republics.'*

MR. T. PRAKASAM

The turning point in Mr. Prakasam's life came from the inauguration of the non-co-operation movement by Mahatma Gandhi. I have a vivid recollection of the figure he cut in the days before N. C. O. from a scene on the Central Station platform somehow indelibly imprinted on the memory. Luggage indicating a lavish standard of living lay all about him in the first class compartment that had been reserved for his use. He was dressed in silk suit tailored in faultless style. He looked remarkably handsome, but more than looks what impressed me was a certain distinction that he carried about him with effortless ease. Nature has endowed him with a majestic presence. He has a demeanour that suggests a Roman tribune. He is the type of man that cannot remain unnoticed in any assembly. At sight of him, strangers cannot help asking their neighbours, 'Who is he?' He com-

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mands the confidence of people, before ever they know anything of him, with a distinguished way he has of carrying himself; and the loftiness of his mien is an attribute of personality that no stress of circumstance can shake or impair.

From a high pinnacle of affluence Mr. Prakasam was cast adrift on a stormy non-co-operator's career in which, as the years went on, it became his lot to face troubles and hardships such as have befallen few political leaders in our time. He renounced a magnificent legal practice. Princely careers have in India been renounced at the altar of Satyagraha, and names like Das and Nehru conjure up memories of resplendent sacrifice, but if the size of renunciation is to be measured with the stress of the sequel, the grandeur of Mr. Prakasam's offering before the shrine of Gandhian politics must be reckoned as something unsurpassed in the annals of non-co-operation. For the six months immediately preceding his surrender of practice he had an income of some Rs. 8000 a month. He was a rich man at the time of his retirement from the

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advocate's profession. He had houses, lands, and a bank balance of Rs. 2 lakhs at the least. All have disappeared in the effort to maintain "Swarajya".

Few newspapers have had the sensational career of "Swarajya." It took people by storm, and Broadway where the office was first located, used to be besieged from 3 p.m. onwards by huge crowds eagerly awaiting the day's edition. From its very start the paper established a remarkable hold on the affections of the public. It created what at that time was a record in circulation and advertisers were not slow to recognise its publicity value. There was no lack of capital either. Apart from Mr. Prakasam's fortune which almost entirely went into its coffers, he collected by way of share capital (which was well understood to mean donations) immense sums from all over the country as well as from beyond the seas. Failure seemed impossible for a concern blessed by so auspicious a combination of propitious circumstances, but nevertheless "Swarajya" failed. It was due to unlucky choice of managers. A

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careful manager mindful of the pennies would have been the making of the paper. It collapsed under the direction of eccentrics that had the weirdest notions of economy and efficiency. Money was waylaid before it reached the cashier. Agents appropriated collections. The wonder was that under the chaos that passed for management the paper lived for as long as it did.

Though it turned out to be dismal as a business, the editorial record of "Swarajya" as a newspaper was a proud one. The proprietorial note which generally goes with an axe to grind or a spirit of exclusive privilege, was altogether absent in its conduct. It was a perfect democracy of journalists in which each felt a sense of personal identification with the whole concern. Jealousies and backbitings were unknown among the staff. They slaved for the paper for very poor pay which was generally irregularly paid. Yet there was no bitterness because the chief at the top kept no reserve of prosperity for himself, and others felt a little ashamed at claiming

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rights that added to the strain of his obligations. All the suppressed discontents of the staff went into the making of a fierce nationalism that gave no quarter to the British Government. It roused the patriotic sentiment of the people in a way that no other newspaper had done before and has not done since. The habit of counting the cost which tends to cool the blood and makes words fall flat, was totally foreign to Mr. Prakasam's nature, and the result was a certain daredevilry of outlook in editorial expositions which turned out to be a priceless formative influence for robustness of public life in the area served by the paper. Mr. Prakasam as editor never damped the enthusiasm of ardent spirits with worldly-wise counsel. Under the impetus of his non-intervention, they found resounding expression in defiant doctrines that made for sturdy national action and rendered non-committalness a misdemeanour.

Mr. Prakasam wielded 'Swarajya' as a formidable weapon for political propaganda. And it bore the marks of his own qualities as a politician. As a lawyer he had deve-

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veloped a patrician style, but when he turned from the Bar to politics, he became a democrat of democrats. Journalism to him was but a hand-maiden to the politician's all-engrossing activity, and his was an absentee editorship filled with tours to the remotest villages. Hence his knowledge of the people is vast and intimate. His physical needs are singularly few, and his capacity for responding to the sufferings of the poor is unlimited since it comes from a fount of philosophy filled with experiences that would have maddened or brutalised a less gentle spirit.

Mr. Prakasam possesses an iron constitution, immense physical stamina and phenomenal industry. He has reserves of incalculable will, and his regime as Minister was an epic of hard work. He was perhaps the hardest working of Congress Ministers in Madras. Strong, sturdy, full of sympathetic concern for the poor, imbued through and through with the passion of a patriot, and utterly fearless, he is an ideal leader of the populace in a mass movement for freedom, and he is full of a rich humanity that at

once puts followers at ease. Leadership is generally consolidated by hopes of favours to come, but Mr. Prakasam's influence is not, in the least degree, contaminated by the sway of interested motives, since to follow him is to get burnt in the devouring flame of some unremunerative enterprise or other. It is a tribute, to his personality that despite this, his hold on people continues undiminished.

He has his idiosyncracies. One of them is barter. He dreams of village republics creating prosperity for themselves by successfully banishing money from their transactions. The idea of organising all kinds of work, including the running of a newspaper, by payments and collections in kind and not in cash has an incorrigible fascination for him that refuses to be subdued by the lack of enthusiasm of an unresponsive world. Doggedness in Mr. Prakasam stands in need of no encouragement from external stimuli, and he will hold undaunted to pet conceptions that have once appealed to him, supremely unmindful of the hostility or derision of

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others. His pertinacity is unconquerable. Yet he contrives to keep young with an open mind ready to admit faults and eager to do justice to opponents. A strange blend of humility, dignity and fairmindedness constitutes the substance of his manly qualities and it makes him extremely lovable. His humility is without pose and lies often hidden, just as his dignity is without affectation. His fair-mindedness is devoid of the tinsel of opportunism. The common notion that he is simple minded is quite erroneous. It arises perhaps from the many-sidedness of his interests which at times outstrip the equipment at his disposal for intelligently handling them. He has a deep-rooted sense of his mission for propounding a new and original economy in defiance of the established principles of currency and exchange and the ruling doctrines of orthodox economists, for all of which his contempt is profound. Neither the learning nor the reputation of any acknowledged master of economic science overawes him, and he will hold on to his own theories with calm imperturbability.

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before any body of sceptics. Self-confidence hard to defeat is the spring of his greatness in the midst 'of all limitations. He is an extremely human kind of man though his gruff exterior conceals it and there is no meanness in his composition. He is a stalwart of our time with a towering stature, one of the few that can accomplish really great things in the shaping of national destiny.

MR. K. SRINIVASAN

Mr. K. Srinivasan, Managing Editor of "The Hindu," has perhaps done more to invest the profession of journalism with dignity and high status than any other man in our time. The traditional impression made by journalists in India is that of being a thoroughly disgruntled lot. They have good reason to be so. Mortality is high among Indian newspapers. Their incomes are both meagre and precarious. The staffs serving them are in consequence ill paid and irregularly paid. Arrears are a quite common phenomenon. Yet they endure it all, because to some, the profession with all its economic unattractiveness, has a fascination beyond all price. To these the temperamental happiness of a congenial avocation makes up for all disabilities. They have work after their hearts which gives them constant delight in the doing of it, and no grouse about wages can arise over what, in any event,



*'His business acumen is keen
and alert.'*

they would have been ready to do for the satisfaction of it, without any insistence of financial recompense in exchange. But the generality of journalists are not of this class and are differently constituted. They cannot ignore economics. They are keenly sensitive to the economic disadvantages of the profession and resent it prodigiously. But what is the alternative to submission except the worse state of being thrown out of work, often with little prospect of being absorbed by another newspaper? For, every paper has its own waiting list of unpaid apprentices marking time desperately for vacancies to arise which they never seem to do. Prospective unemployment is a terrible nightmare to disturb the equanimity and bend or break the backbone of the sturdiest of journalists, and it makes them eat humble pie and pocket tamely affronts and injustices in treatment, at which, behind all the external forbearance shown, their blood continually boils. Yet when a fraction of what they themselves endure without protest befalls any others, they must dip their pens in fiery righteousness and bring out lashing

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words of unsparing denunciation. Such is journalism.

To Mr. Srinivasan belongs the credit for having almost revolutionised the outlook of the magnates of the Press regarding the treatment due to editorial staffs. A rare and fortunate circumstance was his being editor in addition to proprietor. Newspaper proprietors are in general guilty of a certain pride of ownership which makes them regard editorial talent as a commodity which they can completely buy up and dispose of as they like. In reality the true essence of editorial talent lies in just the elusive quality which is never open to purchase and which none can commandeer or completely master. The capitalist proprietor to whom a newspaper is but an investment rarely realises this, and is apt to show chagrin over merits that reveal character in journalism, and find gratification in flaws that besmirch its finesse and essential spirit. That is why toadies abound in high favour in so many newspaper offices making life unendurable to their self-respecting colleagues. Only when no external influence domineers over

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the internal integrity of the Press, which is possible only when the editor and proprietor are one, can the inherent contradiction between the business and editorial sides of a newspaper be dissolved, and "The Hindu" bears witness to the completeness of such dissolution under Mr. Srinivasan's direction.

He seems to have made consideration for the staff the guiding principle of his office. Considerateness reveals character in proportion to the absence of a check from above to super-impose it. There is no taint of the virtue of necessity in the admirable self restraint of an absolute owner who, when large profits are made, does not divert them, as he could so easily have done, to personal use, but restores them to the institution from which they came for providing for its own improvement. An arrangement like this is the best insurance for preventing the exploitation of human labour for capitalist profiteering, and it has made "The Hindu" the most enviable newspaper service in India. Incidentally it has provided an ideal which less fair-

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mindcd proprietors in various parts of the country are being tempted to follow it only out of vanity, or out of a spirit of emulation, and the lot of journalists has improved considerably in consequence. Mr. Srinivasan is thus a great benefactor of the profession since his example has done far more to minimise the acquisitive zest of other employers and induce in them standards of humanity and fairmindedness in dealing with their staffs, than any agitation of the aggrieved on trade union lines could have done. In his own office the rates of pay are generous. In every little detail attention is paid to the comfort and convenience of workers, and no expense is grudged over legitimate facilities promoting efficiency and the credit and dignity of the institution. The retrenching temperament, ever prone to stimulate unlovely financial meanness, is happily conspicuous here by its absence. There is no exclusive appropriation of prosperity, and amenities like provident fund and gratuities, unheard of elsewhere in the Indian-owned newspaper world; bespeak

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the just concern of the proprietor-editor for all the employees of the paper.

Mr. Srinivasan has extremely lovable personal qualities. He is generous and kind-hearted, a magnificent and unobtrusive giver. I have heard from beneficiaries of his, how amazed they themselves were at the extent of his munificence in responding to their appeals for help. He is not however an indiscriminate donor, and there is nothing in his temperament of the invertebrateness which is incapable of saying 'No' to importunate suitors. Nothing will move him to change his mind once he has made it up for or against a course, and under an appearance of mildness, he possesses a strong will inflexible in the pursuit of chosen aims. Though he is not given to flaunting patriotic sentiment, he has on occasions revealed intense public spirit, and contributes lavishly to national movements and Congress funds. Despite a singularly generous disposition, his business acumen is keen, alert and undeceivable.

Mr. Srinivasan is an inveterate patron of the turf, and the emphasis on racing in

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"The Hindu" has turned out to be the prelude for a regrettable mass infection spreading the craze for betting on horse races to a phenomenal extent in South India. Another permissible comment, which I make in all good faith, is that "The Hindu" is not so fully responsive to the significance of its own location at the centre of the Indian scene, and there would seem to be at work a tendency for a more ready and unstinted recognition of aptitudes of all kinds from far-off places overseas than of the claims and attainments of contributors nearer home. Also the drift of policy on critical occasions is more towards non-committalness than out-spokenness. In the shaping of public opinion, the paper has in most controversies been content to be led where it should have itself given the lead. With all this, it is a newspaper with a great tradition and unrivalled organisation, and its influence with varied sections of the population is ever becoming greater. To thousands throughout the country the day is not complete without "The Hindu". The personality of Mr. Srinivasan is

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imprinted in the many excellences of the paper, and there is hardly a prouder position than the one he holds, not only in the realm of journalism but in the wider sphere of our public life as well.

MR. POTHAN JOSEPH

In the craftsmanship of journalistic writing, Mr. Pothan Joseph is now India's most accomplished practitioner. It might be said that not in India alone, but in the whole of the English-speaking world, there are very few who excel him in literary artistry. Literary artistry is a faculty that comes not by industry, but by intuition. Knowledge may be acquired, and the diligent can score in its acquisition; but the fashioning, out of bits gathered from it, of masterpieces of polished expression, is a gift. It is, like poetry, enjoyable by most, but producible by very few. The inspiration that sends out from the latency of stored impressions in the brain the right concept to illuminate a subject and the apt phrase to illustrate its correct shade of meaning, is the true mark of genius, but its functioning is a mystery beyond the range of analytical treatment. Joseph is endowed with this genius to a remarkable degree.



*"Indefatigable seeker of 'Copy'
for newspapers."*

MR. POTHAN JOSEPH

He has an inspired pen; and whatever comes from it is distinguished by high quality, and no taint of mediocrity ever mars the execution of his superfine penmanship.

His output of daily writing is staggering. And he feeds it with an alertness that never flags and comprehensively draws material from incessant rumination, books, talks, discussions and scraps of paper on which every thought as it comes is noted in mysterious hieroglyphic symbols for future use. He is an indefatigable seeker of "copy", but what is gathered in the quest is very different from the form in which it eventually emerges. He is like a magician who collects odds and ends from the wayside and transforms them by the setting in which they are placed and the polish given to them into exquisite literary pieces of surpassing grace and charm. Like the Scarlet Pimpernel, he is here, there and every where, but his industry is both intense and subtle, and there is no moment except, perhaps, when sleep gives rest, at which his mind is not exercised over some engrossing

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theme or other. He appears to take life lightly, and he has an immense capacity for extracting pleasure out of it, but he is one of the hardest working of Indian jonrnalists. Writers are at a disadvantage in that the strain they pass through is not visible to external observers. A clerk tied to the desk gives an impression of prodigious hard work, whereas the limited time devoted to actual writing exposes authors and journalists to constant misunderstanding at the hands of unimaginative patrons. As a matter of fact, writing is the least objective of all the arts ; and its worth can never be assessed by any measure of quantity. The days when printed matter, just because it was printed matter, carried sanctity and gripped the attention of readers, are gone. This is an age that has learnt to survive irrational reverences, and nowadays people exact for the attention they give, some excellence competitively established for justifying it. Mere pages can bring no custom to newspapers except when the pages are so numerous that they can be treated as waste paper fit to be sold for profit without reference to contents,

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but then they cease to be newspapers and become a commodity. Ability to rouse the interest of readers, and keep it alive in a state of expectant longing from day to day, is the essence of the success of journals, and only some possess it while others do not. Joseph has this capacity in a superabundant measure. He can never be dull. His investment value to proprietors of newspapers is far beyond anything he may cost them, because there are thousands of readers on the tiptoe of expectation every day for a taste of the delicious "Cup of Tea" which his genius has converted into incomparably the brightest and most popular feature in all the Indian Press today.

The ingredients that constitute excellence in writing are as various as there are excellent writers, and they do not lend themselves to be dogmatized about in general terms. It is easier to deduce from the works of particular writers the excellences that contribute to their speciality. Joseph's speciality is not single-pointed but many-sided. His mind is a storehouse of inexhaustible anecdotes and miscellane-

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ous information of all kinds, and he adds to the stock by hours of reading every day. Nothing once stored is ever lost since he has a tremendous memory. Physical condition reacts on mental power, and on the principle that a sound mind can function only in a sound body Joseph keeps fit by hours of daily walking. Except when weather forbids nothing is ever allowed to interfere with his daily schedule of walking, and a morning regimen of tramping has become indispensable for the normal functioning of his faculties. The virility of a mind kept in fine trim by vigorous physical exercise is in constant evidence in the high average of intellectual stimulation maintained in all his work, often in the midst of distractions that would have brought disintegration to anyone with less of the sustaining ballast of personality. His mastery of the Bible is complete and thorough, and a quaint Biblical quality is an inseparable part of the winsomeness of his literary style and diction. Wit sparkling out into brilliant epigrams: a capacious humour. Dickensian

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in its range but entirely original and altogether free from any touch of imitation ; irony, keen and subtle, capable at times of devastating strokes ; an inimitable naivette ; perfect mastery of the apt word for expressing the right shade of thought ; these are the distinguishing marks of Joseph's journalistic handiwork, and when he is at his best he easily takes rank with the greatest masters of English writing. He has brought literature into journalism to a larger degree than any scribe of the daily Press of our time.

Few editors in India or elsewhere possess his versatility of gifts. Attainments generally deemed incompatible are found in him in harmonious combination, illustrating a nature endowed with many rare distinctions and unsuspected virtues. He is a keen sportsman ; a splendid art critic ; an adept in racing technique ; a widely read historian ; something of a scientist ; and as if all this were not enough, he is a dabbler in the comparative study of religions. He has an impish Ariel-like fancy and is a peerless originator of ideas for cartoons. He may

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aptly be called the father of the cartoon as a feature of the Indian Press, and to gauge the full value of the title, all that is needed is to take stock of the arid custom whereby the richest of our newspapers still continue to patronise cartoons of far-off extraction and themes nearer home are left out of the feature. Under Joseph's tutelage Shanker and Vasu have blossomed into celebrities and^c reached levels of achievement that might well make Low look to his laurels. As an editor, Joseph is a lynx-eyed discerner of merit, and is ever assiduous and warm-hearted in his encouragement of those that show signs of promise in journalism. His geniality which is unfailing makes him a singularly popular chief, and happy recollections of grateful staffs follow him from many newspaper offices (he has had, so far, twenty four different jobs) for prompt and timely appreciations cherished as priceless possessions. He has but two flaws as an expounder of opinion. One is malleability. He is prone to put himself too much at the disposal of the employer for the time being, and the result is a certain flexibility of

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temper impinging on the pristine impersonality of his writing. One must be prepared to pay any price and stand stiff and unbending, four square against all rough squalls that threaten from all sides, in order to be able to mould the opinion of one's time, but Joseph is capable of producing equally delightful masterpieces reflecting quite opposite lines of thought. His expediency is derived from the same type of sentiment as enables an advocate to present a client's case irrespective of his own convictions, without feeling himself oppressed by any sense of impropriety. Another characteristic trait is his susceptibility to strong personal likes and dislikes which seem at times to take complete possession of his entire cerebral apparatus with the result that his thought fails on such occasions to function independently and all its turns are either *pro* or *anti* in relation to some favoured person or pet aversion occupying important key positions in his mental compass. Faith and passion are personal, but judgment should be detached and impersonal ; impersonal

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detachment is the secret of real power behind all criticism, and if only Joseph had it in a larger measure, he would be an invincible figure in Indian journalism with a capacity for shaping and leading opinion that none could hope to approach in the India of our time.

Joseph is a delightful companion and association with him is both a liberal education and entrancing entertainment. He has a grasp of some of the most intricate problems connected with business and share markets. There is a streak of rich humanity in his nature and he responds readily, generously, and without stint or calculation to appeals from the needy of whom there is always a miscellaneous assortment hovering round about his person. The world's benefactors practise their beneficence from an elevated pedestal from which they are apt to view the failings of common men through a microscope fitted with a lens of puritanic sentiment. But Joseph in social relations is a personification of kindness without any tinge of critical fault-finding. He is fond of good cheer and is thoroughly at home in all

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kinds of company except perhaps that of ethical bigots, in whose presence he is impelled to retire within a shell of impenetrable reserve. He has his moods of moroseness, but they are few and far between, and generally his disposition is sunny, and he carries himself with a springy elastic step which chases away gloom and exhudes good humour and bonhomie. He responds to the society of women with relish and joy, but selectively with the keen eye of a connoisseur. But his generosity is sexless, and he has a benign temperament ready to shed its favours on all and sundry, without any insistence on tests of character to justify it, and is an ideal friend to sinners in trouble apt to be shunned and censored by an illiberal, self-righteous world.

DR. C. R. REDDI

Recognition without reward has been the political fate of Dr. C. R. Reddi. He is a man marked out by his abilities for the highest preferment in public life. Wide knowledge, an alert mind, a clear brain, consummate facility of expression in speech and in writing, are all his. He is an able debater and a parliamentarian of brilliant parts. After an English education, he blossomed into rich fame at the very threshold of adolescence without having to pass through any noviciate of achievement for establishing his worth. At that time there was glamour in his name. A halo of influence surrounded him. He aroused ardent faith in many expectant hearts. People accepted him without doubt and question as the coming man.

What have the years brought to this gifted being whose emergence from school and college was heralded with so many auspicious signs of future victorious fulfil-



"Patron of art and literature."

ment? All that promising future has shrunk to the dimensions of a rather disappointing past, and at the confluence of time we have arrived in, Dr. Reddi occupies a position of futility pathetically emphasised by the senatorial acerbities roused by his administration as Vice Chancellor of Andhra University. An Inspector-General ship of Education in Mysore, lost by a rash resignation that need not have been accepted, but was actually accepted with insulting alacrity, represents the peak point of his career so far. But politically he is a disgruntled figure today given to the mouthing of doctrines carrying a considerable suspicion of sourgrapism. He wields a cipher influence in politics. Very few take his expositions of what should or should not be done, seriously. He is left high and dry in arid space, and he has no followers whatsoever. There seems no likelihood of his ever rising to Cabinet rank.

To what riddle of personality can be traced the astounding disparity between the start and the achievement of Dr. Reddi's

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career? Of the rewards of life, it has been said that they do not always go to the right people, and some get them who do not deserve them while others deserve them who do not get them. Luck is indeed a great intangible factor contributing to success, and ill-luck haunts some lives like a malevolent ghost making ducks and drakes of inestimable aptitudes, and spoiling with its unseen hand, the fruition of much diligent and aspiring industry. But Dr. Reddi does not give the impression of having unjustly suffered at the hands of a wayward goddess of fortune dispensing her favours with perverse whimsicality. On the other hand the miscarriage of all his brilliance seems to conform to some fundamental propriety, leaving no mark behind of a wrong needing to be righted. We think of him chiefly as a man who had the ball at his feet but missed the goal because he failed to play the game fairly and good-humouredly. In the game of politics, a certain modicum of sustained public spirit, expressible in terms of convincing indifference to one's own personal self-interest, or at least a

passable imitation of it, must run like an unbroken string through all acts, and forms the true secret of the influence frequently capitalised on momentous strategical occasions for seizing power from grasping rival hands. In this game, to succumb to a temptation on the way is to get lost; but renunciation of a seeming advantage is transformed straightaway into a valuable credential for preferential treatment when other benefits come for division. Renunciation is the ladder to acquisition and he that renounces most acquires most in the complicated give and take of politics pursued as a profession. Dr. Reddi has revealed on occasions that he is lacking neither in public spirit nor in capacity for unselfish personal sacrifice under the sway of public spirit. In the heyday of non-cooperation he threw back the office of vice chancellor in spirited vindication of national self-respect, and his letter of resignation to the Governor is a great classic in the country's patriotic literature. While non-cooperation lasted, he expounded its merit in frequent pronouncements of singular grace and charm,

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a service doubly to be prized since he is an intellectual aristocrat rather disdainful of public opinion, and was temperamentally incapable of feeling any delight in hectic forms of mass self assertion. But though he rose occasionally to great heights of renunciation, the strain of the effort seems to have exhausted all the impetus that led up to it, and completely throw him out of all balance and equilibrium. He pursued what he had renounced with regrets that embittered his soul and led him into a mental habit of expecting exorbitant rewards in exchange. He could not wait. Small things assumed disproportionate value when measured with his impatience, and one who had proudly spurned a university vice-chancellorship had no compunction to accept a district board presidentship. But he did not keep it when he got it. All too soon he gave it up, clutching at the first opportunity that came for resumption of the once discarded vice-chancellorship. The too quick change-over made him look a political weather-cock, and transformed him from a political

leader into a careerist. Sensitive to the new appraisal, he became first disappointed, then discontented, and a sense of grievance would seem to have taken permanent possession of his soul, with disastrous results on his thought and mind and capacity for cheerful existence. He has become a cynical, aggrieved being with a chronic susceptibility to swing to the very opposite of the courses that once commanded his warm praise, and as an outcome of the transition, people's faith in him has become transformed into an estimate of changeableness.

A series of pet antipathies constitutes now the staple of Dr. Reddi's political thought. His gospel is a patched up jumble of conclusions arrived at through cerebrations having one or other of such antipathies as starting point. On most men and matters you can be sure that what he has to say would be the exact reverse of something which some abhorred person, usually C. R., has already said. It is said of President Wilson that not even as a mere dialectical exercise would he consent to advance argu-

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ments which he did not believe in. His inflexible adherence to convictions established him in contemporary opinion as a personality of incorruptible intellectual integrity. With Dr. Reddi as we now have him, dialectical skill seems to do duty as a complete and exhaustive substitute for convictions. His own peculiar limitations are woven into the texture of a novel political philosophy, and it is passed off as an independent contribution to idealistic thought. The significance of his opposition to Constituent Assembly lies perhaps less in the arguments adduced against it than in the obvious fact that he himself is no *persona grata* in any constituency conceivable for sending a representative for such an assembly, and so he can have no part to fill in its proceedings. The same can be said of his fantastic indictments on party cabinets. He shares with many opponents of Constituent Assembly and party government the common failing of having no political future at all to look to through either of them, a hypothesis that may be denounced as unfair attribution of motives, but I have

ventured on it nevertheless, since motives furnish the indispensable key for a correct understanding of Dr. Reddi's politics.

But whatever the dependability of his theorisings, they are ever presented with delightful naivette. You may agree or disagree, approve or condemn, but it is always a treat to read him or listen to him. He never lapses into inconsequence. With less of varied experience he has more erudition than C. R. He has the same subtlety of brain, but his intellect is more massive, more amply stored with instructive material culled from wide reading. There is, too, less of pose in him. But whereas C. R. is a dynamo of unceasing industry, Dr. Reddi is susceptible to aristocratic fits of indolence from which he is time and again extricated by spasmodic impulses of ambition egging him on to intensive spells of hard work. He is a literary craftsman of exquisite skill, and gems of epigram scintillate in his speech and writing casting thrills of enjoyment on all who can respond to their beauty. He is an indefatigable lover and patron of art and literature, and many aspiring writers prone

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to diffidence must have found welcome self-confidence through his discerning encouragements, for he constantly went out of his way to cheer with appreciative plaudits any work that impressed him with its quality. Years ago I was one day surprised to receive a note from him inscribed thus: "You write literature, the real thing. Rarely have I come across such subtle yet clear^{*} thinking, such beautiful and lucid style". I was an unknown stranger to him, but he had taken the trouble and thought to find me out and write that kind and generous note. In the troublous politics of our time, successful leadership calls for a lot of intrepidity, a ruthless spirit and a thick skin, but Dr. Reddi has none of these. His sensitive nature, full of the smouldering longings of a refined, hedonistic temperament, shrinks from the ascetic repression imposed on Indians as a test of patriotism by Gandhian ideology, and he is in other ways also unfitted for the rough and tumble of anti-imperial politics involving physical risks and discomforts and chances of material ruin. He is not made for roles where

power is deducible from adeptness in wielding an iron hand with a silken glove. Hence he became a misfit in the profession of politics as practised in our day, with Satyagraha as the key to distinction. He simply lacked the key and improvisations jarred more than they helped. In a more favourable setting, his genius would have shone with splendour, and he would have distinguished himself above all competitors.'

MR. S. DORAISWAMI IYER

In the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry where Mr. S. Doraiswami Iyer now resides, there is a curious custom. Every room is given the name of a descriptive substantive. Thus the room where newspapers are placed is eloquently called Falsehood. My first reaction to the insulting title was one of deep personal hurt. I now know better. "Catering to all tastes" is the consciously adopted basic function of most newspapers. What else is it except not being oneself and trying to be everybody else? Can there be any more promising basis for the realisation of assured falsehood? By far the ablest editor I have known used to say that if you spoke out your mind and only your mind and nothing but your mind, you could write, at the most, only four articles on four different themes and no more. We used to have hot, stormy, nerve-racking discussions over this rather challenging



"A true and great gentleman"

hypothesis, which were retrieved from culminating in violent unpleasantness only by the warm personal regard that we each had for the other. I have known unabashed proprietors insisting on deletions of unexceptionable comment from editorial columns for no other reason except the openly confessed one that it was likely to offend some powerful moneyed interest which the management were just then engaged in wooing for advertisements. Limitations of mind or motive fettering free thought and action are the staple of a considerable part of newspaper efficiency, and their total achievement, for all the glitter covering it, is the result bluntly proclaimed in the Ashram as — falsehood.

“Devotion” is the pleasing appellation bestowed on the room assigned to Mr. Doraiswami Iyer in the Ashram. It sums up beautifully the internal dynamic stimulus which through various sensational transitions landed him at last in exclusive self-dedication to Yoga. Devotion is by no means a passive affair. It can be no weakling’s virtue. The essence of it

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is a vaguely sensed harmony between a valued ideal and one's own psychic being, and a perception of disharmony in everything else. Between the two is lived a life of stress, of continual conflict between higher and lower standards, and Devotion comes into play in the constant burning of the dross and alloy of human nature and tempering the gold in it, making it shine and sparkle with the purifying influence of the fire of discipline it is made to pass through. First as a passionate patriot of revolutionary tendencies ; then as a rebel against weak-kneed apostles of moderation deftly given to steering politics along lines of Safety First ; thereafter an unquiet idealist confronted with the disillusioning inadequacies of political leadership even at its best ; later a restless vagrant in quest of mental equipoise ; still later a disciple at the feet of Sri Aurobindo, but carrying on the profession of advocate with ability, skill and unique mental detachment, as though it were part of a Sadhana for a higher evolution in which the ordinary standards of competitive exertion have no

relevance or significance ; finally a delighted renouncer of career, prospects and prosperity for the sake of consecrating the remaining years of life to spiritual fulfilment — all these comprise a succession of experiences that has fallen to the lot of very few in our time, and Mr. Iyer has passed through it all as through a triumphal march from one victorious struggle after another. His life has been a constant seeking after Truth, not truth as an abstract state to be reached in isolation from the concerns of workaday existence, but as a measure of value to be applied in every detail of living, big or small, and it was an all-engrossing pre-occupation with him to refine the working apparatus of ego-centered consciousness, usually called individuality or personality, into increasing efficiency according to his own lights, through the vigilant and unsparing exclusion of all gross motives from the texture of thought and being. Thus he became a supreme exemplar in the art of living.

I was an eye-witness of the scene on the station platform when Mr. Iyer took leave

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of friends and colleagues before his departure to Pondicherry for permanently residing in the Ashram. The crowd that gathered to bid him good-bye was a remarkable medley of all varieties of people, and it revealed his astonishing capacity for getting into intimate relations with quite dissimilar people and winning their lasting faith and affection. To very few is it given to go on adding to the circle of friends, never losing any once admitted to the conclave of the elect. This is because some subtle competition springs from somewhere to spoil the ease and harmony of cherished friendship, and two persons coming to covet the same thing, whether it be money, power, the favour of a patron or the love of a man or woman, tend to ways of mutual hostility; and permanence of affection has to be ensured by careful avoidance of the devastating offence of treading on each other's toes. Mr. Iyer trod on nobody's toes. Because he shed all exclusiveness, he competed with none and gave offence to none. In embittered moments of disillusionment we turn to God whom we em-

bellish with attributes the very reverse of those that have led to such disillusionment between fellow human beings, and spirituality often has its birth in some great convulsive crisis of experience. Whether Mr. Iyer ever passed through any crisis of this kind is more than I know; but if he has not, he arrived, fairly early in life, through some other equivalent impetus, at the stage of bestowing on a resplendent divinity of his mental conception all the heart's homage of love clamouring for responses to feed its intensity, which the generality of people bestow, to their continual unhappiness, on some limited imperfect object. Result, he attained a capacity, rare in this planet, for inclusive enjoyment of life's blessings with one and all, without jealousy, envy, or the misery of exacting insistences on reciprocity. Hence there were no acerbities in his composition and he found it possible to treat others as he treated himself. Everyone whom he met he regarded as a friend, and on friends he bestowed the consideration usually reserved in the world to members of one's own family. His life

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was an epic of achievement in the exercise of non-exclusive affection towards all, and it was reflected in the hospitality of his house where clients and juniors (and who not?) felt utterly at home and ever sure of warm welcome. But his judgment was a thing apart from his treatment of people. He was capable of cold analytical appraisings which preserved him from ever becoming the dupe of the designing, as is the common fate of so many generous men, but he bargained for no price in exchange for kindness and was a trusted friend and benefactor to many sinners.

What a large place he filled in Madras was never so well revealed as at the moment of his leaving it. There were tears that day in some eyes which I had till then thought incapable of such sentimental liquidity. As for poor Natesan, his well-beloved friend and junior, to whom he had shown a father's kindness and a chum's intimacy, confiding to him momentous secrets and seeking his counsel in all things, he was on the verge of utter break-down which somehow seemed most natural in that assembly of deeply

MR. S. DORAISWAMI IYER

moved devotees. From that day to this, a host of juniors and others on whom he had bestowed affectionate sobriquets mainly made up with the initials of their names, have been leading a rudderless existence, with all ballast gone, and wafted indeterminedly here and there by every passing wind of sentiment or circumstance in the absence of the strong benign influence that used to guide them with spontaneous sympathy and timely help of every kind. The leading luminaries of the Madras Bar are rather close-fisted towards the juniors that devil for them, but Mr. Doraiswami Iyer is a grand exception almost making up for all their parsimoniousness, and none has ever been so esteemed and beloved in the profession as he among the younger aspirants to distinction. It is a fact that quite a large number feel orphaned by his absence, which is a tribute never paid to retiring men in the fiercely competitive profession of law where all withdrawals are welcomed on account of the prospect of new poolings of clients and fees they hold out to the survivors. Gene-

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rosity to juniors apart, Mr. Doraiswami Iyer was one of the most accomplished masters of advocacy that the Madras High Court has ever known, and in consummate cross-examination he has few equals. He practised law, as in fact he fulfilled every task he undertook, as though it were a sacramental offering of service in furtherance of the cosmic purpose of the universe, and this sentiment was not an abstraction to him, but a felt reality forming the basis of all effort. Hence there were no trivialities to him and he always went to work with scrupulous thoroughness irrespective of fees. He regarded skilled execution as true spiritual realisation, and made himself impregnable by exhaustive research into all the bearings of the adversary's case. He cultivated knowledge with intensive application and his delivery was a flawless instrument of exquisite incisiveness, deadly accuracy, and well-chiselled and polished style. No wonder, adoring clients found him god-like and Bench and Bar regarded him with deep respect.

Inspired by standards not of this world,

MR. S. DORIASWAMI IYER

Mr. Doraiswami Iyer has lived a life of indescribable charm and beauty. There is no tinsel in him. He is completely devoid of snobbery. His generosity and kindness have no facets intended for publicity, and are divine in their disinterestedness. His unostentatious benefactions, moved by deep humanity without calculation, but always measured out with care and discrimination, have through a long period of years conferred solace and support on many deserving men of talent in difficulties, and he has enriched life at many points through consistent and respectful patronage of gifted thinkers, artists, writers and philosophers. He has survived success and prosperity without any corrupting taint. Roughnesses disappear when things are viewed from a height. Mr. Iyer seems to have wrung harmony from opposites as a result of the elevated mental altitude on which he habitually resides. In matters of money renunciation even is a hard enough thing, but he has gone a degree higher and virtually bridged the gulf between acquisition and renunciation. He achieved the ideal

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of a house-holder through separation from family, and for years before him his wife had been a permanent inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Parental fondness is generally insulting to offspring who are regarded as somewhat helpless and badly needing the prop of a fortune to get on in the world, but Mr. Doraiswami Iyer revealed respect for his sons by equipping them with a first class education and then practically disinheriting them, they as true sports, cheerfully appreciating the tribute. Everything he possessed he gave to the Ashram. Such complete response to his own outlook of idealistic spirituality as he has been able to inspire without any exception among all the members of his own household is rare in the world. Hardly one in a million is capable of inspiring it, the reason being that, in the midst of a great deal of affection, collective material self-interest is the basis of family life and if it is endangered in the slightest degree, subtle antagonisms are apt to start from all sides spoiling its cordiality and even poisoning its atmosphere. Hence the beginning of parental renunciation of

material acquisitions is often the end of filial devotion and domestic peace, and those who, like Mr. Doraiswami Iyer, are able to realise the one without forfeiting the other, are truly blessed indeed. With all his spiritual qualities, however, he is no ascetic. He simply revelled in music and his appreciation was a source of constant delight to the incomparable Veena Dhanam all through her life. Her death must have stricken him hard, for it was the one occasion on which, after retiring from his profession, he broke his self-imposed reticence to lay a public tribute of appreciation at the shrine of her muse. Cricket was another of his enthusiasms, and he let himself go in enjoyment of that favourite game with a boyish abandon that stole time greedily from the most serious pursuits, and his preference always was for the gallery where he enjoyed the lusty cheerings of the crowd as much as he did the feats of the bowlers and batsmen in the field. In many ways he is unique. In him are combined the wisdom of a sage, the detachment of a philosopher, the erudition of a scholar, the

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probity of a saint, the kind-heartedness of a mother and the rollicking good humour of a boisterous youth in his teens. There is always good cheer and sunshine in his vicinity. He is a gracious, comprehending being full of rich warm friendliness, an artist to the finger tips, and above all, a true and great gentleman.



"Heat and cold are immaterial to him."

MR. BULUSU SAMBAMURTHI

Mr. Bulusu Sambamurthi became a changed man when he was elected Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly. He used to be one of the most garrulous of politicians. He lived at high tension. Existence was one continual enthusiasm. There never was any lack of a cause or pet fad to absorb all the faith of the moment. Roused and excited, he went about harranguing one and all, a regular tornado of talk all his waking hours, and he was never so happy as when expatiating to willing listeners on the beauty of some creed that had caught his fancy. He was an incomparable speechifier. With eyes glistening with joy he would engage you in discussion on a rousing theme like Surya Namaskars or Complete Independence, and as he warmed up to his theme, gusts from an inner fount of unquenchable merriment would come out and set up cyclonic disturbances in the atmosphere of the

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whole neighbourhood around. He was no respecter of persons and spoke his mind bluntly to all wielders of authority. He was a deadly menace to the pompous and the self-important, and they were filled with dread at his approach. Like V. J. Patel, he was regarded as an 'enfant terrible' by older Congress leaders, and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari as Congress Prime Minister must have thought of his relegation to the restraints of the presidential chair in the Legislature in the light of a tactical advantage for the effective muzzling of an incorrigible disturber of decorum.

After he became Speaker, Mr. Sambamurthi performed a feat of which he was generally thought to be incapable. He has become sparing of speech. Those who know him well can imagine what the effort must have cost him; and I am told he has imposed on himself a daily regimen of absolute silence for a couple of hours every morning. This terrible act of self-discipline affords a revealing clue to the whole nature of the man. There is nothing he will shrink from doing once he makes up his mind to

MR. BULUSU SAMBAMURTHI

do it. He will swing from one extreme to another with unabated cheerfulness and no apparent sign of strain, and reactions to fate or necessity or faith that are spread out over long periods in the case of ordinary people, are in him concentrated in moments and immediately got over. Palate is one of the hardest things to conquer, and the most resilient cannot subdue involuntary revulsions when confronted with unaccustomed fare. Mr. Sambamurthi has an intense capacity for extracting enjoyment out of edibles and is a very good eater, but he is also capable of epic feats in fasting as well as in swallowing any kind of food unmindful of taste. While in Vellore Jail he used to astonish all by making a mixture of all dishes and treating himself to it with perfect gusto. He could mix salt with sugar and both with buttermilk, milk, soup and dal and help himself to the indescribable amalgam with apparently undiminished relish. He fasted with the same enjoyment with which he feasted. Heat and cold are immaterial to him. Though affectionate by disposition, he

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endures grief and loss like a stoic without moving a muscle. When his son died in the prime of life, he must have felt the bereavement terribly, but no depression clung to him. He carried on as if nothing had happened. Worries do not oppress him. His capacity for detachment is phenomenal. Nothing has any terror for him.

People wondered how he would comport himself in the Assembly chair, and they speculated in particular on the dress he would wear. For, the sartorial achievements of the present Madras Speaker constitute very nearly a sensation of our time. Prior to the advent of Non-co-operation, he was somewhat of a dandy, dressed spick and span in the latest style. Then he took to Khaddar and cast off shirt and coat, and when the Mahatma took to the loin cloth, he went one better and the shrunk dimensions of the barrier he permitted between himself and absolute nudity spread comment and consternation in the Cocanada Congress where he was the organiser of all arrangements. Subsequently he made a con-

cession to conventional standards of propriety to the same extent as Gandhiji, and has remained there all the time. Ours is a land where religion and patriotism are measured in terms of the dress that people wear, and rapid strides in reputation have been made by the simple (though to many quite difficult) process of casting off garments. Versatility in matters of apparel is very often confounded with fickleness and quick change artistry in public life. So when Mr. Sambamurthi became Speaker there were hot debates everywhere as to the degree of concession he would make to the established decorum of the new position. On the appointed day, to the joy of all backers, he ascended the gadi, the unchanged picture of his own self, and since then he has dominated the Chamber as few of his predecessors have done.

He must be regarded as a great success in the role of Speaker. Occasionally the old love of haranguing comes out a little, but it must be said to his credit that he has held it well and resolutely in check. He is without any kind of awe for anybody. It

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is impossible to bully or browbeat him. He possesses enough intelligence and common sense for mastery of a working knowledge of rules but not too much of it. His masterful handling of proceedings has enabled an enormous amount of legislative work to be put through intensively in record time, and he has on occasions proved himself an intrepid custodian of legislators' rights. The Estates Land Act Report of Mr. Prakasam would most probably not have seen the light of day but for the firmness with which the Speaker stood against all moves for getting its publication shelved. For all this, Mr. Sambamurthi deserves credit, and it is sure to be bestowed on him the better in the absence of his own self-satisfied elucidations. Every good worker is entitled to consciousness of work done well, but the achievements of the great are generally marred by vainglorious pomposity. The patriot's mantle fits Mr. Sambamurthi best, however august a Speaker's role may be.

For a time it appeared as though many old enthusiasms of Mr. Sambamurthi were

MR. BULUSU SAMBAMURTHI

being dissolved in the responsibilities of the Speaker's office, but the impression was misleading. Passion for national independence is a powerful and genuine sentiment with him, and when the time comes there is no sacrifice or ordeal at which he will quail. He has no selfish personal or family interests. His attitude to property is communistic, but he is incorruptible. He is unafraid of poverty. He is not subdued by affluence. He is brave physically and morally, and can face danger and pain with cool and calm composure. He has the essence of philosophy in the midst of excitement. In the public life of Andhra Desa, he is one of the two or three leaders capable of influencing the masses and getting things done.

MR. V. V. GIRI

Very few labour leaders in India know how to, organise a successful strike, but Mr. V. V. Giri is one of them. He knows how to lead labour aright, protecting them on the one hand from rash challenges to authority spelling disaster, and on the other from weak submission to ill usage tending to expose them to exploitation by masterful employers. Fomentors of revolt for its own sake have been the curse of Indian labour. They have intoxicated workers with hectic doctrines letting loose a spirit of cupidity, but producing no effect of discipline for acquiring new rights and responsibilities. It is of course true that Capitalism has bred a type of employer who is a parasite incorrigibly bent on grabbing profit for himself by sweating workers, and the ending of the vogue of these parasites would undoubtedly be a great blessing to society and to our entire system of industrial production. But it cannot be done by abortive strikes resulting in the strikers



'A good mixer.'

getting utterly crushed. The starting of strikes without a proper assessment of their prospect of success has become the staple activity of certain professional agitators, and they have hurt labour more than the worst of employers by egging them on to courses of resistance on wrong issues at the wrong time with insufficient preparation, and then leaving them in the lurch, deserted and without guidance and in a demoralised condition, to shift for themselves as best they could. Unscrupulous agitators of this stamp make a rather flourishing business of it, while their dupes, in vast numbers, continually go to the dogs.

Mr. Giri is a pleasing example of competent labour leadership. The function of discipline is to inculcate a sense of duties along with insistence on rights—a rather unpopular labour—but Mr. Giri discharges it with stern resolve and gentle preaching. He is master of a special technique in labour leadership reflecting the wisdom of the Shakesperian adage, “Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear it that the enemy may beware of thee.” He waits for

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an enormous accumulation of grievances to tell its own tale and makes redress certain by using moderation as a weapon. Employers are caught in the net and have perforce to yield. In the regime of the Congress Ministry, Mr. Giri held the portfolios both of Labour and of Industry, a combination appropriate to a Communist State, but rather an incongruity in a capitalist system where Industry and Labour reflect separate interests that conflict more frequently than they harmonise. To have made a joint responsibility of the two was a stroke of administrative craftsmanship that only Mr. C. Rajagopalachari could be capable of; but none could have borne the strain of it as Mr. Giri did. To be a successful Minister simultaneously for Industry and Labour, one had to command the confidence of dissimilar and potentially hostile interests each perpetually engaged in picking holes in the other. No decision could be made without being pounced upon by one or the other of the two as being unduly partial to its opponent at its own expense, nor was any refuge in strict neutrality possible, since neutrality

in administration means a policy of drift and evasiveness, entailing stagnation and no movement. Yet Mr. Giri managed to secure the trust of all the mutually antagonistic elements he was called upon to deal with as Minister. How he achieved it is a mystery beyond analytical treatment. It must be due to the intangible gift of personality which only some possess.

The Congress Ministry was a team of variegated talents, and Mr. Giri cut in it a figure of remarkable bustle and importance. Mr. Rajagopalachari was a personification of alertness inspiring alertness in others. Mr. Prakasam, in habilaments resembling a toga, carried himself like a Roman with a touch of bewilderment in the eye and an inimitable dignity of bearing. Dr. Subbaroyan conveyed an impression of polish and pleasant manner from which all acerbities had been carefully eliminated. Dr. Rajan was a rough diamond of a Minister conveying suggestions of hidden value under a rugged exterior. But Mr. Giri impressed people as a man of grand schemes and great intentions. With a dash of North

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Indian flavour in South Indian setting, and a sartorial equipment not conforming to the normal Madras pattern, he suggests an unprovincialised residue of mind and mentality not completely domesticated in local politics. It may be due to interprovincial nationalism or international cosmopolitanism, and its effect is seen in a certain capacity for detachment which clings to him in the midst of the heat and passion of controversy raging all around. Local patriotism impels many in proportion to their ardour to get embroiled in parochial campaigns, but Mr. Giri seems to dwell on an altitude of unconcern for regional struggles. He was projected into the Madras Ministry by an impetus that came from his standing as a labour leader in the Central Assembly and in the country generally, and he upholds the spirit of that occurrence by preserving a large outlook even in the consideration of small details. He is an Andhra without the Andhra habit of aggressive self-assertion and circumscribed political thinking. He is a good mixer capable of making himself pleasant in all companies.

He comes of a notoriously hospitable family of which the members move with each other like friends and comrades, without any of the reserves and reticences that usually mar social relations between close relations. A great man with whom I once spent a good deal of my time was so universally revered that the very esteem in which he was held worked as a barrier to separate him from his sons. They adored him but could not feel at ease in his presence. In the midst of the most hilarious merriment, his advent brought chilling silence and they would all stand up in tongue-tied reverence till he left. But as he was a comprehending being, and was besides quite wealthy, he gave his sons a separate house where they could feel free and grow without the stunting influence of his own dominating personality. The very reverse of this was the relation that obtained between Mr. Giri and his father, the late Jogiah Pantulu. They idolised each other and lived like perfect chums. I could never know whether the son admired the father more, or the father the son.

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Mr. Giri is a kind-hearted man of generous disposition, anxious to soften the hardships of life for one and all. He has the temperament of a good samaritan and it is apt to carry him beyond his depths in a world of limited possibilities for befriending others. Well-intentioned people when they give free expression to their intentions tend to encourage others to bank on them, and the latter, when disappointed, repay the service by creating for them a large reputation for promise-breaking. For this reason, reticence is the best of all shields for administrators and public men who can always afford to let their deeds speak for them. But Mr. Giri has not cultivated the use of this serviceable shield. He has promised a number of things which he has not been able to perform, cheap Indian-made radios for instance. He should perform more than he promises if he is to reach the full height of his potentiality as leader and administrator.



*"There are no frozen credits
in him."*

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

Born in any other province, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya would long ago have become President of the Congress, but he has paid the penalty for being an Andhra by just missing the front rank of leadership though it is years since he has outgrown the stature of a merely provincial leader. Environment plays in India a large part in deciding the fortunes of public men. A little greatness will go a long way in some places where public opinion acts as a wind from behind to push deserving aspirants along the path to fame and influence, while in others every inch of progress has to be fought through against the adverse forces set in motion by unsympathetic, coldly critical, and hence deprecatory neighbourhoods. Mediocrities hailing from some parts of the country have, in the politics of our time, a pull over even men of real genius belonging to some other parts, because of the difference in propelling impetus between

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their respective environments. In Bengal, internal strife has become almost chronic, but all criticism of local leaders is dissolved in a powerful sentiment of provincialised patriotism when it is a question of a reckoning with outside rivals. Subhas Bose may have his detractors, but he has almost a whole province behind him in tackling any enemy emanating from beyond its sacred precincts. The Maharashtrians possess the same racial pride as Bengalis, but they are blessed in addition with a capacity for sustained team work, and the disfigurations of internal dissension are happily absent in them. But the Andhras are a curious people. They choose their idols from a distance. At home an excess of hyper-critical faculty levels down all distinction, and hero-worship is at a discount. One has often to flee the place of one's own birth and win laurels abroad to obtain recognition from one's fellow-townsmen, and the principle finds extended applications over larger areas than towns till the entire province is covered. An essential ingredient in the touching affection which Andhras are wont to display

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to their renowned great like Sir C. Y. Chintamani and Sir S. Radhakrishnan is provided by the fact that early in their lives they exiled themselves to a distant territory.

Dr. Pattabhi has stuck to his native town of Masulipatam which he has never left career-hunting, yet he has compelled the Andhra temperament, contrary to tradition, to achieve a marvel by bestowing appreciation on, comparatively speaking, a stay-at-home politician. This, in itself, is a feat and it has been rendered possible to Dr. Pattabhi only through the carrying power of his extraordinary versatility. But unlike most versatile geniuses his life has been a planned one. A successful doctor who might have risen to any height of affluence, he renounced medical practice after the rapid acquisition of an adequate competence to maintain him in comfort the rest of life. Since then occasional excursions into lucra of all kinds, but money-making him, not the main pre-occupancy activity to be indulged in,

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nonchalance, for the absorption of a small fraction of surplus energy. These excursions have enabled him to acquire a high reputation for business talent, and had he utilised it to the full, he might have easily revolutionised the commerce and industry of Andhra Desa and ended his days as one of the country's foremost financial magnates. But he was content to give the best years of his life to honorary service in public causes, and the impress of his ability is stamped on whatever he took a hand in, notably co-operation. The just reputation for superfine quality that Andhra Khadi now enjoys is largely due to consummate resuscitations of decadent and decaying craftsmanship effected under his direction. Capacity for organisation seems to have come intuitively to him without having to draw any lessons from acquired training or technique and not one of any of the undertakings sponsored or guided by him has so far failed.

Dr. Pattabhi possesses a perfect equipment for shining in public life. He is an indefatigable and voluminous writer and his

ruminations on contemporary themes are rarely compressed within the dimensions of a single article. They run into series with astonishing celerity. His eloquence in speech is torrential. In conversation he has a rapier like-wit. In committees, he is alert, vigilant, keenly critical and never at a loss for the telling retort. These are the external graces of a mind functioning with perfect skill in the exploitation of all latent means for the offensive and defensive transactions of the workaday world. Some persons have unfathomable profundities of learning which they are unable to bring up to the surface in any communicable form capable of impressing others. Some others make a resounding progress through life carrying a vast emptiness within. The economy of Dr. Pattabhi's personality is run on the principle of cent per cent utilisation for every available asset, and no wastage. There are no frozen credits in the man, and he maintains his account with one and all in a state of ideal liquidity with no unused reserve. Like Germany under Hitler, all his resources,—mental, moral and of every

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other variety, — are kept in a state of mobilised readiness for action, and armed *cap-a-pie*, he confronts all comers with the glint of battle in the eye and a true warrior's love of tournamental display. He may have but a few acquired words of Hindi or Urdu in his repertory; undaunted, he will make up for lack of weightage by dexterity in permutations and combinations, and what is more, blithely cross swords with professors and pandits of acknowledged renown.

Dr. Pattabhi loves debate and argument, and controversy is as the breath of the nostrils to him. He has a controversialist's biting tongue, but he has, too, what few suspect, a gentle heart at bottom. Few that appeal to him for any kind of help are ever turned away, after steam is initially let off in an outburst of patronising chiding, and much of his time is taken up with plans and ministrations for extricating improvident people out of tight corners. The external facade of his nature is critical, but it is warmed inside by true kindness and helpfulness, and he is a restless

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schemer of schemes for conferring economic benefit of one kind or other on indigent political workers ruined by high mettle and love of country. A capacity for easy fraternisation with all and sundry rarely goes with deep affection, but this rarity has been achieved by Dr. Pattabhi. He is at home in all companies, yet he is capable of canalised intensity of selectively bestowed affection. His well-known friendship for the gifted editor of the *Krishna Patrika* is one of the pleasing classics of our time. Two more dissimilar natures can hardly be thought of for fulfilling the conditions of a life-long companionship. Sri Krishna Rao is a Yogi in bearing and shrewd in the practical transactions of life. Nectar flows from his tongue, and with morsels of honeyed words expounding the finest art and culture and the highest truths of philosophy, he can keep those with whom he deigns to cast off reserve, enthralled for hours at a time. Dr. Pattabhi too can hold and sustain the interest of listeners with fascinating talk, but there are more pinpricks in it than sweetness. He

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is less punctilious in the choice of company ; less reserved socially and the impression he makes is one of quite unphilosophical acquisitiveness. But a certain measure of unavowed philosophy lived in practice is revealed in his dealings with others, and latterly there is evidence of considerable mellowing dissolving the initial roughnesses of his once, rather arrogant disposition. The two friends complement each other and make a perfect and delightful combination.

Dr. Pattabhi has in him the makings of an excellent administrator, but for political leadership in times of stress and trouble his fitness seems to be subject to limitations of temperament hard to throw away. What is hard is not however impossible and the extent of his success in the effort will mark Dr. Pattabhi's progress in the top rank of national leadership. In times like the present, a certain quality of dare-devilry, such as might strike the prudent as outrageous, is needed to force the pace of forward effort in the midst of all the reaction encompassing it, but Dr. Pattabhi

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seems to be a little nervous of himself when it comes to revolutionary departures from the inherited traditions of national effort. If he succeeds in rising above this disability, he can soar very high, for he is brilliant all round with a combination of aptitudes rare among public men.

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Sir S. Radhakrishnan has stormed the world with his dazzling speech and shot into an international reputation with meteoric speed. His lean, lanky figure, all bone and no muscle, is physically of inconspicuous proportions, but by decking it with long coat and grand turban, he has evolved an effect of quiet professorial dignity. With all the aid drawn from consummate habiliments, he is rather scare-crowish in appearance, but intelligence beams from the face. It is extra-ordinarily keen and fresh, and the years have made very little difference to it. A head of white hair is the only sign of age that he carries. But it seems somewhat of an incongruity, as though it were a wig set up there, for otherwise he is the same today as he was years ago. Time has been very kind to him. It has not aged him, but made him more boyish and buoyant. He has risen to fame as an expounder of Indian philosophy, but that too is an incongruity.



"His critical acumen is uncanny."

To the Western mind, the function of philosophy is the intellectual postulation of the principles deducible as underlying the scheme of creation. But intellect plays no part in Indian philosophy. Philosophy in India is the descriptive revelation of an actually felt experience of a choice few who, through some discipline of the spirit, attained a higher consciousness which somehow unravelled to them supreme knowledge of the ultimate mystery of all existence. A Yogi when he turned teacher became a philosopher, and Indian philosophy is the codified experience of Yogis put into words for the guidance of aspirants. True instruction in Indian philosophy can come only out of the depth of Yogic experience, but Sir Radhakrishnan is no Yogi. In this disability is summed up the tragedy of his vocation as an interpreter of Indian philosophy in the West. In the very nature of the case, Indian philosophy is not a marketable article of knowledge. Teaching is a profession, but the teaching of philosophy is not intended to be a profession. It comes, without reference to university

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chairs, from out of the fullness of love and knowledge of great souls that have realised, through spiritual insight and aptitude, the truth about the cosmic functioning of the entire universe. These will not need to go out expounding their knowledge. Seekers will go to them. Can the teaching of truth be made a subject of a curriculum? If the universities are wise, they will cease endowing chairs for the teaching of Indian philosophy, and leave it to the Yogis, who have their own methods of conveying instruction, since indeed there are no other competent teachers of the subject. But Sir S. Radhakrishnan's job has been that of interpreting with the intellect a kind of knowledge that can be reached only when the intellect is transcended and left behind.

On the intellectual plane, however, his performances have been truly sensational. When he speaks, his eloquence is torrential. He takes listeners off their feet in dazed amazement at so much speed. They are overwhelmed, as it were, by a rush of words that stampedes them into admiration. Amongst our other great speakers, C. R.

and Mr. Sastri hold a very high rank, but there is more art and less velocity in their speeches. They give time to people to think and follow them. Pauses to recover breath and emphasise a point are not infrequent occurrences in their expositions. Their accents, too, tend to vary with the emphasis intended. But Sir S. Radhakrishnan, when confronted with an audience, is a regular tornado of unceasing words at high pitch, and the words tumble out in breathless rapidity with hardly a comma or full-stop in between. The rate at which he speaks imposes a magnetic spell on all that hear, and had he less of the faculty of intellectual analysis, it would have landed both him and them in utter mental confusion. But he has a first-rate brain unsurpassed in its capacity for clear analytical understanding. His critical acumen is uncanny. As a teacher he used to give "notes", and if you read them well you had no need to read anything else from any book on the subject they dealt with; for in the art of extracting substance from chaff from out of the pages of the most voluminous of books,

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and condensing it into the smallest imaginable compass, he is an adept without a peer. It may be questioned whether "notes" fulfil a right function in teaching, and it is quite possible that like predigested foods, they tend to spoil the efficiency of normal appetites. But unlike several professors whose staple of teaching was contained in a huge notebook (of folio size) which they cherished as a precious heirloom, and went on reading year after year before successive batches of students, his "notes" bore no stereotyped form, and they came out unrecorded from mind and memory, with skilful up-to-date improvisations that made them look refreshingly original each time. He created a feeling of awe with the same ease and thoroughness with which he mastered even the most complicated problems of logic and theory of knowledge, and the most ruffianly spirits of the class room, incorrigibly bent on mischief at other times, were quelled and subdued by it and reduced to their best behaviour. He enforced discipline like a martinet, but spoke no harsh word.

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Of late Sir S. Radhakrishnan has been dallying a little with politics and public life, and he would undoubtedly make an excellent politician. In politics, it is easier to work from the top than from the bottom, and what with the credit he enjoys for immense influence with important personages in many lands, the setting is ready for his assuming a place of prestige in the top ranks of political leadership. He has all the attributes needed for a resplendent political career: economic independence, alertness of mind, an eye for the main chance, capacity for intrigue, intellectual brilliance, masterful powers of exposition, and, more than all else, the glamour of a vast international reputation. What else, with all these assets, he would cut in the politics of our time is an entrancing theme for speculation. It seems a pity — but such is the case — that while political subjection lasts, many splendid gifts that might have made singularly successful administrators, must be consigned indefinitely to cold storage. The ending of subjection must crowd out



*'His ardent faith in the Congress
is a thing of beauty.'*

MR. S. SATYAMURTHI

Mr. Satyamurthi is the symbol of a terrific struggle in the politics of our time, the struggle of the proud poor man ambitious for leadership and distinction. Gandhism has made us familiar with ascetic modes of rendering public service ; and by abstemiousness, leading a simple life, giving up income, spinning, starting an ashram or going to jail, some have managed to build great political reputations. Mr. Satyamurthi too tried his hand at some of these ; he too has been drawn into the vortex of Gandhian politics. But his temperament does not respond with ease to the strain imposed by Gandhian ideology.

He is primarily a dialectician. He loves speech and debate. He rejoices in the excitement of hot controversies. Forensic triumphs are his constant delight. He is thrilled by rose garlands and the adulation of crowds. He loves limelight and enjoys having a lot of incense burnt in front of him. He is a parliamentarian of excep-

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tional ability, and he is in his element in the atmosphere of legislatures where interpellations and points of order provide him with delicious opportunities for the display of his skill. He has expensive tastes and a keen relish for the enjoyments that money can buy. Had he been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he would have taken fortune by storm, risen to any eminence, and attained perfect happiness and contentment. The stress of having to earn a livelihood has been his undoing.

Plebian means reacting on patrician tastes rarely fail to work a revolution on character. The rewards of political life take a long time to arrive and those who aspire for them must have ample means of their own if the voice of scandal is not to work its havoc on their good name. The power given to the vote has brought a lot of canvassing into politicians' lives ; and canvassing is a pretty expensive business. And there are also side-shows to be staged : tours, parties, dinners and conferences to be attended to. Expensive entertainment constitutes no mean part of what is called

propaganda. Even to be invited to a function has its embarrassments to the poor. For, independence of spirit to the extent of not being ashamed of poverty in any form is given but to a very few, and the misery of the sensitive who cannot afford the luxuries their hearts hanker after, knows no bounds. When they are constrained to walk for lack of bus fare they have to pretend that it is for the benefit of their health. There are very few annoyances comparable to the necessity of having to trudge to the grand entrance of a fashionable place of entertainment, which fellow invitees reach in resplendent cars, but it is a constant and harassing experience of all whose public importance lacks the valuable support of a comfortable bank balance. In every kind of allegiance to the insidious influence of money-power there is snobbery : and it is generally expressed in the defence extended to standards of propriety prescribed by wealth. It has taken a heavy toll of politicians' independence in our midst. Much of the shabby gentility seen everywhere is its

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handiwork. We owe to it the choice of rich candidates of poor merit for high electoral honour in preference to poor candidates of rich merit.

Mr. Satyamurthi has for years maintained an unequal struggle for supremacy in a political game played with dice heavily loaded in favour of the rich. He seems to have developed a technique of his own for getting even with all challengers in the handicapped game. He has received perhaps the roughest buffetings that have ever fallen to the lot of a political aspirant. But through them all he has managed to survive, with head well raised above the water's level, and even to keep on swimming.

It cannot be said that he has reaped an adequate harvest for the time and energy given to public life. He has missed many prizes. Deft hands, suddenly coming to the fore from somewhere, have quietly pushed him aside when power and supreme leadership seemed to be in sight. He must have had his bitter disappointments. But no chagrin at ill usage has ever made the

slightest breach in his steadfast devotion to Congress which, ever since he joined it, he has stuck to with unwavering loyalty. He is quite unlike so many political turncoats of our time who change their creeds with the turn of the weather and are ardent Congressmen today and hot gossellers of anti-Congress cults tomorrow, coming in with hopes of appointments and departing when disappointed. Early in life, on the very threshold of adolescence, he made deliberate choice of politics for a career and selected Congress for his shrine and he has never once turned back. On many an occasion he could have had a comfortable job had he wished, but the blandishments of bureaucratic office have had no power to tempt his soul. He has given to Congress a life time of service comparable to the deep worship of religious devotees at the altar of some venerated deity. Not once has he attacked colleagues in public. The value of the restraint is enhanced by his capacity for realistic political thought, as likely to arouse stormy hostility at first as it has invariably been followed by eventual acceptance in the end. Mr.

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Satyamurthi has thus often proved to be an advance signal for approaching changes of front in Congress policy, but rarely has he received any appreciation for these repeated manifestations of insight. He was an advocate of Council-entry when No-change was the prevailing creed. He pleaded for office-acceptance when obstruction from within was the motto of Congress politics. Both Council-entry and office-acceptance have since come into their own, but a heavy price was paid by Mr. Satyamurthi in paving the way for it, in the shape of attacks from all and sundry arraigning him on the score of inconsistency. Consistency has been described by Schopenhaur as the hobgoblin of little minds. Mr. Satyamurthi has revealed political aptitude by not being afraid to be inconsistent or advocate changes in advance of the general preparedness of public opinion for them. To be proved right in the sequel and yet desist from triumphant vendetta, this is quite different from enduring adverse criticism for proved fallacies. Mr. Satya-

murthi's ardent faith in the Congress is indeed a thing of beauty to be admired.

Yet he suffers from temperamental limitations rather out of accord with some of the inflexible injunctions of the Congress creed. There is a deep grain of conservatism in his nature and his faith in Brahminism is a challenge to the non-communal outlook enjoined on Congressmen. Orthodoxy in social and religious matters is in Mr. Satyamurthi's blood and vain have been his efforts to shake it off. He is steeped in the culture of the Ramayana and is a profound believer in the supremacy of Sanskrit learning. He is a hedonist fond of dress and good living and has an insatiable love of music. Privations make him chafe and he is apt to lapse into fussiness and vain display when charged with high and important public functions. These are the weaknesses, driven to the point of disequilibrium, of a man condemned to life-long repression of the natural impulses of a highly sensitive and emotional temperament, and they emphasise the need in our midst for some considerate and munificent

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Rockfeller to endow a fund for keeping hard-working and talented politicians above all want.

Mr. Satyamurthi is one of the most hard-working of South India's politicians. He is quite methodical in his public work. He combines with diligence exceptional abilities as a speaker and debater and he is at his best in quick exchanges of wit and raillery during question hour in the Assembly. His gifts have not however kept pace with the demands of time and a certain staleness is visible in his recent expositions. Often mannerisms take the place of fresh original thought, and on most occasions when he speaks, you can be sure of those ubiquitous fellows, Tom, Dick and Harry, being dragged in to emphasise some point of derision. With all his disabilities and deficiencies, Mr. Satyamurthi is one of the three to whom belongs, more than to all others, the credit for having moulded the public life of Tamil Nadu unto unshakable Congress-mindedness. His remarkable resilience of spirit deserves very high tribute. The tempers of leaders are

MR. S. SATYAMURTHI

wont to rise and fall according as they receive praise or blame. But in the midst of an ocean of unfriendly carpings, Mr. Satyamurthi has contrived to keep his good humour unsullied and himself ever ready for further onslaughts against the bureaucracy's sway. He has rendered public service of immense value for very poor recompense, and often in the teeth of attacks and vilification.

MR. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has achieved perfection in practising Gandhism as a fine art. In the circle known as Wardha his influence is paramount. It is the crown of years of ceaseless labour in the silent acquisition of control over the trust and confidence of people that matter. C. R. is the unseen power behind a network of strategically cultivated sources of influence functioning with variegated energy from key positions distributed all over the country. The sum-total of the supremacy he has established over individuals of outstanding eminence in their respective territories and jurisdictions is a formidable force, and it works with quiet but relentless persistency to remove all obstacles from its path. In Bengal, Dr. B.C. Roy; in Behar, Babu Rajendra Prasad; in U. P., Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant; in C.P. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj; in Bombay, Mr. Munshi and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai; in Mysore,



*'He practises Gandhism as a
fine art.'*

Sir Mirza Ismail ; in Hyderabad, Sir Akbar Hydari ; in Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer ; in the Imperial Capital, Mr. G. D. Birla and in the whole of India, Mahatma Gandhi, all these can be said metaphorically to have been brought into C. R.'s pocket, a capacious and astonishing receptacle into which latterly have been gathered, in addition, quite an unbelievable medley of persons like Lord Erskine, Sir Mahomed Usman, Europeans both in the public service and in non-official pursuits, Liberals like Mr. G. A. Natesan, bureaucratic tin-gods on the heights of Delhi, and so on. What an incomparable phenomenon of tributaries for feeding the power of one man ? Yet there is no obtrusiveness in the manner in which the influence is exercised. This is because of C.R.'s unrivalled adeptness in getting behind people and making them dance to tunes of his setting retaining all the while the illusion of their own importance as free agents. Independence is a cherished illusion with most people. And in the contacts of life a defensive apparatus is set in motion in the hearts of the vain at

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the approach of the masterful. But C.R. is a master-craftsman in converting possible adverse gales from the unfathomable spaciousness of human nature into congenial wind for his own safe sailing on the most turbulent of political waters. He lets out suggestions, and makes others believe that they are creations of their own fancy. Because of a certain economy, impossible for the unrestrained, which he unfailingly observes in all external demonstrations of self, he is able to stand behind and watch while others work out his intentions, and in this way he enlists the vanity of his chosen instruments into his own service. It was only when administrative responsibility put him at the summit of power without having to work for it with invisible fingers and dexterous psychological legerdemain that an incongruity developed, and discords were seen to mar the smooth working of a technique perfected in two decades of non-official striving in public causes. It was as if a power from behind the throne had suddenly elected to take a seat on the throne itself.

C. R. as Prime Minister receded from one after the other of the tenets that formed the substance of his creed in pre-ministerial days. He had been an avowed opponent of communalism of every kind. But as Prime Minister he accorded unstinted administrative sanction to the Communal G. O. of the preceding regime. He had been associated, along with all other Congressmen, with the principle of separating the judiciary from the executive. He quietly went back on the principle when the time came for implementing it. He had been a champion of civil liberties. As Prime Minister he simply ignored civil liberties. He found a new strange defence even for the insufferable wrong involved in the payment of excessively large salaries to European officials and almost took people's breath away by likening the pampered elements in the public service to exotic plants requiring special treatment. He paid court to the very influences which it was part of his mission as leader of his party to confront as an opponent, and he depressed the hearts of followers with repeated manifestations of

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favour for their rivals. One of my unforgettable memories is that of a friend with whom, as a fellow-student, I shared everything I had with complete absence of reservation. He too did the same towards me. We were perfect chums. We had a common purse and at one time there was only one coat between the two of us. Soon he was blessed with affluence, and in one of his visits, I asked him to dine, but he excused himself with a quite valid reason. We went out together, and imagine my surprise when only ten minutes later, he voluntarily invited himself to a meal at another friend's! Later, when I asked for an explanation, he coolly answered, "That fellow (meaning the acceptable host) has ten lakhs, all cash, in his bank. Even at the cost of some strain to the stomach, he is a person to be cultivated." I thought of this incident when C. R. accepted the hospitality of the Mysore Government and held aloof from the Congressmen in the State while the two were at daggers drawn in a bitter fight over political rights. Life demands exacting tests from character,

but very few are the blessed ones that survive to the end 'with others' faith in them remaining unshaken by one disillusioning experience or other. The number of persons disillusioned during the two years and a half that C. R. ruled as Premier must have been quite a legion, for the period was filled with revelations of his real being utterly at variance with the assumptions that till then filled the hearts of many admirers. It had been taken for granted that he was a genuine exemplar in the practice of simple living, but he converted simplicity into a pose when he permitted photographs to be taken — and published in newspapers — showing him washing his own clothes. Trust is born and begins to reign only when there is perfect conformity between the letter and spirit of one's behaviour, but C. R. functions in diverse capacities in significant styles that seem somehow to cast subtle challenges at the essential spirit of the roles in which he appears. Thus he is a nationalist by profession with an administrative record filled largely with bolsterings of commun-

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alism. He is a Congressman with a rather diluted regard for other brothers of the faith, and all his considerateness seems to be reserved for Justicites, Liberals, Europeans and the Services. One feels that a word of an I. C. S. Civilian weighs far more with C. R. than the combined judgment of colleagues of his own party. He has taken asceticism as the staff of life, but other ascetics get very little of his attention, which is rarely denied by him to millionaires. He is a Satyagrahi with truth and non-violence for mottoes, but he is a veritable Chanakya in politics with a genius for intrigue unequalled in our time.

Money, power and sex dominate the lives of most people, but C. R. is impervious to the influence of two of them. He does not, of course, put rich and poor on the same pedestal, and is not above paying court to the wealthy, but in matters of money his probity is incorruptible. He has a liking for the company of the fair sex, and enjoys cutting jokes with them, but love as a grand passion does not seem to have come his way. But for power he is

really greedy, with a greed akin to the miser's to whom any thought of a sharing with others is misery unendurable. It may be regarded as the tragedy of C. R.'s life that, with the mental temperament of a dictator, he is by circumstances impelled to adhere to the limitations of non-violent technique in political action. On the plane of ability he is hard to beat. His mental clarity is unimpairable, His sense of logic is keen and vigilant. His analytical faculty works with clock-like precision. He has an immense capacity for hard work, and seems to flourish in proportion to the strain of mental labour imposed on his frail physical frame. He has sparkling wit, a rather mordant humour, devastating sarcasm, and the gift of perfect expression except when calculated ambiguities are indulged in to conceal thought or mislead opponents. Both as a writer and speaker, he is very effective, and in the organisation of publicity for movements commanding his interest, he is a neat and dexterous executant. He is a parliamentarian of incomparable grit and skill, a formidable adversary in contro-

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versy and debate. He is capable of tender and parental concern for those whom he likes, and is ever assiduous in promoting their welfare, but subservience is the price to be paid for his concern, and it is apt to vanish if any tendency to independent criticism is revealed, which he resents as an affront. Towards opponents he is ruthless and unforgiving and as there are no restraints in his exercises of hostility, he is an enemy to dread. He is clever, brave, methodical, never confused, utterly sure of himself, and a splendid organiser. He is a demi-god to a chosen few to whom he has given of his best, but to others he is no idol, and his influence in distant places that get occasional glimpses of his dazzling brilliance in speech is immeasurably greater than with people nearer home.

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